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# Minnesota Impaired Driving Fact Sheet

*Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety*

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In 2009, Minnesota recorded an all-time low in alcohol-related traffic deaths — 141. Still, alcohol-related crashes accounted for more than one-third of all traffic deaths — matching historical trends.

Alcohol-related crashes, injuries and fatalities continue to be a serious problem in Minnesota. Overall, males and young adults are overrepresented in alcohol-related crashes and account for a disproportionate share of fatalities. More than one-half million Minnesotans with driver license records have a DWI.

- The legal alcohol limit for drivers in Minnesota is 0.08. It is always illegal to drive with an alcohol-concentration level of 0.08 or above. Motorists can be arrested under 0.08 if they demonstrate impaired driving behavior. If a motorist's alcohol-concentration is at 0.08 percent or higher, it is a criminal offense with penalties ranging from misdemeanor to felony. It is also a violation of civil law that triggers automatic driver license revocation for up to a year.
- During 2007–2009 in Minnesota there were 1,386 traffic deaths and 494 (36 percent) were impaired-driving related. Of the drinking drivers killed, around 75 percent were not wearing a seat belt.
- Over the same three years, there were 107,376 DWI arrests. In 2008, 32,756 DWI arrests were made.
- In 2009, the Twin Cities' metro area had 49.6 percent of the impaired driving arrests and the 80-county non-metro area 50.2 percent.
- In 2009, males accounted for 74 percent of impaired driving arrests. However, recent yearly trends show an increase in female DWI offenders. Since 1999, female DWI offenses have increased 6 percent — a significant gain according to DPS — and they now represent one-quarter of all DWI offenses. In 1999, 6,505 females were arrested for DWI, in 2009, 7,906 females were DWI offenders.
- Young persons — especially people in their 20s — accounted for a disproportionate share of all arrests. In 2009, people in their 20s represented 43 percent of DWI arrests.
- Of all Minnesota residents, more than one-half million— 541,197 — had a DWI on record. One in seven persons in Minnesota with a driving record (including those with licenses revoked, cancelled, etc.) has a DWI; 228,236 (one in 17) have two or more arrests; 106,174 (one in 37) have three or more; and, 1,216 (one in 3,247) have 10 or more.
- Drinking and driving is especially prevalent on weekends. In 2009, 17 percent of impaired driving crashes occurred on Fridays, 24 percent on Saturdays, and 20 percent on Sundays.
- Most impaired driving offenders are first-time offenders. In 2009, 19,294 (59 percent of all violators) were issued their first DWI. Still, many offenses are committed by persons with prior DWIs on their record. In 2009, 13,462 (41 percent) of violators had prior DWIs on record.